

# A Mark of Excellence

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 1997

## Update on 'The Black Pearl'

It was announced on Wednesday, 29 October, that the film and television rights to **The Black Pearl** were optioned by Rehme Productions. Robert Rehme is currently president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and was at one time part of Marvel Comics.

"'The Black Pearl' is a taut, focused tale of gray morality. This is not a superhero saga. It's a mix of tabloid thriller, romance and adventure," Rehme noted in a Reuters press release.

The next step is 'pitching' the screenplay to potential backers in order to raise the money needed to produce the film. Mark has been busy doing just that, when not working on one of his many other projects. We'll keep you posted on the status!

In the meantime, for everyone having trouble finding a copy of the trade paperback edition, Brentano's and Crown Bookshops are now carrying it. Or order it directly from Dark Horse either on their website, [www.DHorse.com/](http://www.DHorse.com/) or toll-free at 1.800.862.0052.

The ISBN is 1-56971-274-3.



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## Notes from the editors...



First and foremost, we would like to thank those members who have taken the time to complete and return the survey. We are glad for the input, and although some

suggestions may not be taken, (at least not now), others are being implemented. After all, this is a newsletter for us all.

One of the most repeated requests has been for more pictures. Not only are we happy to oblige, we would also like to point out that the still of Mark on the front page is a newsletter-first publication. By that we mean it has not yet been published on the fan club's website, [www.markhamill.com](http://www.markhamill.com). We wanted members to see it first.

Someone asked why bother having a password-only accessible area on the website, theorising that everything would end up in the general area eventually. Our response was this is simply not so. There are features that would be available ONLY to fan club members. We are the ones paying the bill to maintain the site!

Those of you who do not have Internet access, rest assured we have no plans to stop printing hard copies of the newsletter.

Happy holidays to all!

**Wing Commander: Prophecy** is out on



software shelves now!

As with Wing Commander III and IV, Mark is Colonel, now Commodore, Blair, and choices the player makes can determine the course of action taken. On one mission, Maverick- Comm Blair's call-sign- becomes your wingman. Once the battle is over, you discover that Maverick is missing.

With this game, Origin is re-focussing on actual game-playing, rather than the story-line aspect the last 2 Wing Commander games have. As the resident game-player summed it up, 'It's a shoot 'em up, space version.'

You'll need at least a P 166 with a 4x cd-rom drive, 32 MB RAM, a 100% DirectX 5.0 compatible video card with 2 MB PCI SVGA supporting 16-bit colour depth. Check the box for other requirements.

## 'Mark's Done What?!'

Suzanne Askey

The past few months have been filled with a diverse collection of Mark's work. Regular features included the following animation voice-overs: on FOX Kids "*The Animated Adventures of Batman and Robin*", "*Spiderman*", "*Bruno the Kid*" and "*The Fantastic Four*".

Cartoon Network is showing "*SwatKats*" and WB premiered the brand new "*Superman/Batman Adventures*". This series kicked off its season with a 90-minute special featuring both Batman and Superman joining forces to foil The Joker. TBS carries "*The New Adventures of Captain Planet*". Mark continues to host CNBC's series ".com" Saturdays at noon EST.

The television as well as motion picture rights to "The Black Pearl" were optioned by Rehme Productions. This exciting news, announced on October 30<sup>th</sup>, brings The Black Pearl one step closer to its future as a motion picture. October had airings of "*Country Blues*" a 1971 episode of Cannon on Nick's TV Land as well as the 1975 episode of Petrocelli "*The Outsiders*", also on TV Land. Encore presentations of "*The Hunt for Amazing Treasures*" and "*Science Frontiers*" were featured on The Learning Channel. The end of the month featured some of Mark's new narration work. The Learning Channel, in celebration of Halloween, showed back to back installments of "*Unnatural History*" (**Witches and Vampires** as well as **Mythical Beasts and Monsters**) to set the holiday mood.

November premiered a new series on The Learning Channel, Mark can be heard narrating "*Super Structures*". The three episodes to the series, **Nuclear Sub**, **Skyscraper** and **The Euro Tunnel**, were aired in a block, and then separately over a three night period. Serving as host as well as narrating A&E's new special "*Hollywood Aliens and Monsters*" which aired on November 9, 1997, Mark offered his own personal touch to this interesting topic. This special traced the various treatments of aliens and monsters in Hollywood from the earliest silent movies up to the latest releases. This program was also featured in a small write-up with photo in the week of November 9<sup>th</sup> 1997 **TV Guide**, as well as the November issue of **StarLog** magazine.

The month of December is slated for the release of Wing

Commander: Prophecy. This state of the art CD-ROM game should be available by mid-month. Reported to be Mark's last appearance in the series as Col. Christopher Blair, it promises to be an excellent sequel to the phenomenally successful Wing Commander series of CD-ROM games.

The motion picture **Laserhawk** is now slated for an early 1998 release. Mark's role as a mental patient should be an interesting one to watch.

January holds a treat for those fans in Europe. "**Hamilton**", a Swedish-produced film, is set for a late January release. Mark and his family are planning to be on hand for both the Stockholm and Oslo premieres in the last week of January 1998.



Looking  
the  
future,

to

shooting on "**Watchers IV**" has wrapped and moved to post-production. Mark appears in, as well as co-produced the film. This project was featured in the November issue of **SFX** magazine.

# Blast From the Past

Tina Lebelt

## The Partridge Family- Old Scrapmouth -

First aired: ABC TV 1970/71 season

There was only one reason to watch this sitcom in the seventies - and that reason was ... no, not Mark ... it was David Cassidy - a good looking guy - actor and musician. He was the one who gave all girls an adrenaline shock.

The Partridge family was a singing family with Shirley Jones starring as their mother. Do you know a teenager who wouldn't be upset wearing braces? The same happened to Laurie Partridge (played by Susan Dey) at a time where she hoped that Jerry (Mark Hamill) the shy guy she likes, would ask her to go steady. And she would have to get them during the shooting of a family film for a TV show. Crying can help - at least in such a embarrassing situation she was in - and she did it in the family bus. Jerry joined her wearing his radio's earphone ("Hi! What a coincidence - I just happened to be passing by!") - asking her to go steady. So what would you do now? You would try to cover your mouth because no one should see them and run away. And Jerry stood there wondering what happened.

Finally Laurie calmed down enough to rehearse the show. Problem resolved? Nope. When she tried to play the keyboard, she had to stop because she heard the Rolling Stones playing in her mouth. That was too much for all others. But the dentist could explain all - it was the feedback picked up by her braces coming by a nearby radio. Remember - there was someone with a radio! Everybody rushed out to find the source, and Jerry stepped in. ("Hi! What a coincidence - I just happened to be passing by and I nearly got trampled.") Laurie spotted Jerry's radio and realized it has been causing the feedback. The show could go on with no more breaks and problems. And Jerry? He stayed to watch the show and sang along.

Watching these old TV shows and comparing them with shows and films of the last few years - you'll find the same expressions and gestures. Historical note: Jerry gave Laurie her first on-screen kiss.

# Future Watch

Tina Lebelt

## Watchers IV

**Production:** Concorde/New Horizon's Films

**Producer:** Roger Corman

**Director:** John Buechler

**Travis Murphy:** Mark Hamill

**Einstein:** a golden retriever

**It will be part of the US Showtime Channel's series 'Roger Corman Presents'**

**The Outsider - the nominal star of the TV movie - is a genetically-engineered killing machine on a quest against detective Travis Murphy. His costume was made by John Buechler (noted for his effects work on films like "Troll" and "Friday The 13th Part VII") in less than two weeks. Murphy's allies are a female geneticist named Grace Hudson, a partner (played by Gary Collins (also known in the USA as an actor and ladies' talk show host) - who's doomed to die at the hands of The Outsider, and a genetically-altered golden retriever named Einstein.**



**For Mark, there are several reasons to do "Watchers IV". As he explained in a recent SFX interview, "I was involved through 'The Black Pearl'. I pitched it to Concorde, but they had 'Watchers IV' for me. I told them that I was more interested in keeping focused on getting 'Black Pearl' made, but they very graciously allowed me to become co-producer of 'Watchers IV'**

Answer to last newsletter's trivia: Christopher Reeves.

**Trivia:** What do the characters Mark has played in 3 Broadway plays have in common?  
answer next issue.

# Republics & EMPIRES

Previously, in “Republics and Empires”, we covered the first of the Star Wars anthologies, *Tales from the Mos Eisley Cantina*. We touched on *Tales from Jabba’s Palace* just enough to get an introduction to this work. This month, we’ll finish our discussion of the anthology novels, including *Tales of the Bounty Hunters*.

The other famous (or is that infamous?) band from Tatooine gets their own story told in *Tales from Jabba’s Palace*. Of course, this is the Max Rebo band as it appeared before the Special Editions hit the big screen earlier this year. John Gregory Betancourt’s portrayal of Max Rebo, Sy Snootles, and Snit is often comical and not without the touch of irony that graces most of the anthology stories. M. Shayne Bell makes another insightful contribution in telling Bib Fortuna’s tale of selfish ambition and come-uppance. Bell is masterful in describing the condescension Fortuna employs to cope with the day-to-day bothers of being in Jabba’s court. The bittersweet justice of the surprise ending makes the tale absolutely delicious. One of the most hilarious pieces of writing I’ve seen is George Alec Effinger’s “The Great God Quay: The Tale of Barada and the Weequays.” These characters try to solve the mysterious deaths by turning in full faith to their religion, which is immediately recognizable to us 20th-century folks as a Magic 8 Ball. The “Tale of EV-9D9” adds a further sense of the twisted to the anthology in exploring the psychotic mind of EV-9D9. A droid who has a truly sadistic and masochistic streak is indeed something to fear. Her words to

R2D2, “You’ll soon learn some respect,” take on a whole new, sinister meaning after reading this tale. You will also learn some things about droids that you’d never expect to be true. “A Barve Like That: The Tale of Boba Fett” by J.D. Montgomery has been extremely popular. Those who assume that Boba Fett met his end in the Sarlacc’s digestive tract will be shocked to learn exactly how he escaped that terrible fate. You might even want him to escape because this story also explores the man behind the armor in a way that sheds a little light of humanity on his harsh appearance. One of my favorite pieces in this book is “Skin Deep: The Fat Dancer’s Tale” by A. C. Crispin. In *Return of the Jedi*, we see her only once and she is not the most pleasant sight. Did you ever wonder why? As it turns out, her size means her survival on Tatooine, a trait you’ll find fascinating. This is a story of survival, life-long ambition, and love that should be.

One of the things I enjoyed about the first two anthologies was a section at the end called “Whatever Became Of...?” In this, readers got a concise little blurb about what eventually happened to these characters. The blurbs were often as entertaining as the stories themselves. However, *Tales of the Bounty Hunters* does not have this section, much to my disappointment. This book has only five tales in it, where the previous two had sixteen and nineteen, respectively. Of course, the population upon which this book centers is also much smaller. These are the stories of the bounty hunters admonished by Darth Vader to find Han Solo, Princess Leia, and especially Luke Skywalker in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

In each of the previous anthologies, there was no one story that stuck out that I particularly disliked. However, *Tales of the Bounty Hunters* earned that distinction. Now, I know it has often been popular to “bash” certain Star Wars authors. However, I have avoided doing that where I can. I might have a stylistic difference with an author, but that doesn’t mean I’m right and s/he is wrong. Lazy writing is intolerable, though, in this genre. In this anthology, “Therefore I Am: The Tale of IG-88” by Kevin J. Anderson was disappointing, seeming far less Star Wars than a horror adaptation. The craft of the story felt lost in a sloppiness that is inexcusable in this popular universe for which this author is privileged to write. The story leans heavily on brutality and violence to communicate its message, instead of interesting writing. Many of the details are interesting, in how IG-88’s actions have an effect on other happenings in the Star Wars universe. Then, Anderson will describe IG-88 using a loose droid arm as a spear to stop a fleeing human. He talks of the arm penetrating the man’s body, the hand emerging from the opposite side “holding the technician’s quivering heart in rigid metal fingers.” When I read this passage, I laughed out loud, wondering if Anderson had forgotten which media tie-in he was doing this time...Star Wars or The X-Files. In another scene, the assassin droid seeks out a target while the man is sleeping beside a Twi-lek woman. After inflicting his brand of revenge, IG-88 left the room while the woman “shrieked obscenities at him in a language whose translation he did not hold in his databanks.” This particular flub should be beneath a writer of Anderson’s experience. How could IG-88

identify words as obscenities if it was a language he could not understand?

IG-88 aside, the remaining stories proved quite entertaining. Dave Wolverton does a marvelous job bringing humanity, even romance, to the mountain of a man called Dengar. “The Prize Pelt: The Tale of Bossk” is less eye-catching, but weaves the plot through the delightful twists and ironies that mark the stories of each anthology as excellent reading. M. Shayne Bell again adds a new dimension to his characters, actually carrying Zuckuss and 4-LOM to willingly serve the Rebellion and forsake their mission against the underground leaders. In conclusion, Daniel Keys Moran appears again to mold the character of Boba Fett into the man he really is. Through his vision, we follow Jaster Mereel from Journeyman to his latter days as an aging Boba Fett, Bounty Hunter.

Recently, a new Star Wars anthology hit bookstores. *Tales from the Empire* is mostly taken straight from the pages of the soon-to-be-defunct *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. It relies heavily on the work of Timothy Zahn and Mike Stackpole, and all signs promise it to be a good read.

Once you finish these books, you will no longer look at these choice scenes the same way again. Each image will conjure a new swirl of thought and imagination as you remember the tales behind the faces. With the latest onslaught of action figures, many of the characters from your favorite anthology stories can now grace your bookshelves. You can say things like, “This is Momaw Nadon. He came

## Scrooge...

One of the most 'visited' areas on the fan club website is, in my opinion, the hardest to keep up-to-date. (MHArchives may disagree with me there!) It's the 'What's New?' page. There I attempt to list Mark's future personal appearances or cons that he will be a guest at, as well as upcoming television airings of his work. Until recently, this was limited to US and occasionally Canadian broadcasts. Thanks to Tina Lebelt and her UK assistants, we have now added German and UK listings. Of course, the information is only as accurate as the original source is. Occasional mix-ups occur, such as the one recently listing Mark as the host for the A&E North American television premiere of Paul McCartney's symphonic poem, *Standing Stones*. As several people kindly e-mailed both MHArchives and myself, Mark was nowhere to be found or heard. I wonder how many phone calls A&E received since it was up on their website, too! Now I can recycle another videotape....

Some of the e-mail I receive comes from fans that want to share their experience meeting Mark. I am in the process of making this a section on the website. Several survey respondents indicated they would like to see a similar column occasionally featured in here as well. If you would like to share your experience with fellow fans, please take the time to write it down or e-mail it. Photos are welcomed! (Submission guidelines are listed on the back page.)

See you online!



photo:courtesy of CMSkytrader

On 5 December, listeners to KLOS' syndicated 'Mark and Brian Christmas Show', were treated to hearing 'our' Mark play the part of Scrooge in

their annual radio version of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. This is the second year he has participated; last year he played the Ghosts of Christmas Past and Future. The latter character was 'chilling' according to the radio hosts, who also mentioned the following day on how impressed and thrilled they were to work with Mark again. They went on to describe how Mark contorted his body into the slouch of an old man as he performed the role.

It will be re-broadcast on Thursday, 25 December, from 6-10 am, (PT) on KLOS. Check local listings to see if it will be on where you live!

**Note to members that should have received a t-shirt and the March/June newsletter:** if you still have not received either or both, please e-mail HdShroom@aol.com (subject: t-shirt/newsletter) or write:

IMHFC-t-shirt  
PO Box 287

International Mark Hamill Fan Club  
PO Box 287  
Grand Blanc MI 48439

## The Last Word...

***A Mark of Excellence*** is the quarterly newsletter of the **International Mark Hamill Fan Club**. Yearly membership dues are \$15 US, and include 4 consecutive issues of the newsletter, a membership card, and special mailings as appropriate.

For more information, please send a SASE to:

**International Mark Hamill Fan Club**  
PO Box 416  
E Amherst NY 14051

Submissions, including photos or original artwork, are welcomed; final editing is the discretion of the editors. If you wish your photo or artwork returned, please enclose a sase, and attach your name/address on the back of your submission.

**Webmaster:**

Sue Depping  
[www.markhamill.com](http://www.markhamill.com)

**Archivist:**

Suzanne Askey  
[www.markhamill.com](http://www.markhamill.com)

**Staff Writers and Contributors** this issue:

Tina Lebelt- Germany  
Kristyn Rose- USA